



GOD IN FILM

STUDY GUIDES



Producer



Director



Reviewer

ME AND EARL AND THE DYING GIRL

If you knew how relationships would conclude would you invest in this human connection?

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

1 Corinthians 15:55

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God in Film study guides combine your two favourite things, God and movies. Upskill yourself for group discussions that explores deep themes. Learn to be the Producer, Director and Reviewer of your own film discussion group.



PRODUCER

Prep for the discussion

How can you make the most use of your time?

- Watch the movie first alone to prepare to facilitate the discussion
- Read the guide for the movie you are watching, decide what your group needs
- Have a running sheet for the way the event will run, or use our template.
- Arrange your physical or online space for group dynamics
- Pray for the group before you meet.



DIRECTOR

Keep the discussion rolling...

How can you make sure the night runs smoothly?

- As the "director", you are not the expert but the person who makes sure the night runs smoothly, not the final authority on film or God.
- Ask an opening question, to get people thinking.
- Watch the movie together all the way through to allow people to develop their own ideas
- Prepare key clips to re-watch and discuss (provided in guides). These help with engagement



REVIEWER

Help your group members become reviewers

How can you encourage your group to engage with deeper questions?

- Establish a positive culture. Affirm people's comments and encourage respectful listening from the whole group through your example.
- Don't correct ideas but listen, mirror their response and then ask for the group's opinions to keep discussion flowing
- Encourage experiential comments and opinions. When people become more analytical, try and bring it back to the person's experience of the film by asking questions. Use your pre-prepared clips to refresh their initial reactions

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Film Synopsis

Packaged as a quirky coming-of-age story, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* surprisingly becomes a magnificent drama with an unexpected depth. In amongst the story of a self-centred teenage boy comes a portrait of loss, love and life. The central character from Jesse Andrews' novel is Greg (Thomas Mann) who lives a shallow high school existence that is independent of meaningful relationships and conflict. His only friend is Earl (RJ Cyler), a childhood friend who partners with Greg in avoiding most of high school's trappings and together they make film parodies.

They exist throughout their final scholastic year without much drama until Greg is asked by his mother to visit Rachel (Olivia Cooke). She is a classmate who has been diagnosed with leukaemia. Greg and Rachael try to make the best of an awkward situation and satisfy their parent's request to connect. Their relationship moves from standoffish to a symbiotic existence. They come to realise they need each other's support and friendship through this traumatic time. Unlike many John Green novels or John Hughes films, this story has a realistic depth in its many layers of life's trials.



Produce

Planning List

- 1) Watch the Film, what themes can you see? What will your group connect with?
- 2) Prepare some discussion points to highlight these themes (suggested clips (p, 3)
- 3) Prepare a run sheet or adapt the template
- 4) Pray and prepare your space (online or physical)



Direct

Discussion Questions

1. What is your favourite movie? Why?
2. Do you have friends who will stick close throughout the highs and lows of life?
3. How do you handle situations that involve death and grief?



Review

A rare cinematic outing like *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* engages with the consideration of loss and death, but provides discussion points about life. One of the key queries that comes out is what we choose to do with this gift of life? Jesse Andrew's screenplay of friendship is woven together with a confronting evaluation of life, even life after death. This is brought to a head with a dialogue between Greg and his teacher, Mr. McCarthy, that challenges the teen to understand more about the life we live and the life that is left behind for others to remember. In amongst the darkness of death, this film sheds a new kind of light on life. It is entertaining, but produces thoughtful discussion points for a multitude of future conversations.



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Discussion points

Why is a punch in the stomach the very thing we need?

When we are focussed on ourselves and lose sight of others needs, there are times when we need to be shocked out of our selfishness.

When have you had those ties when harsh words or actions were needed to wake you up to others needs?

Take a moment to discuss the friendship of Jonathan and David in 1 Samuel 18

Dealing with grief

This is one of those scenes that captures the mood of the whole film. A short segment that unpacks so many topics such as life, death and grief.

What does the Bible have to say about death? Does this give you or others comfort?

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God[a]; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. - John 14:1-3



Close the Curtain

The pain of losing someone

This whole film is an emotional rollercoaster that culminates with a tragic conclusion. Yet, it is telegraphed from the outset.

If you knew what would happen in your relationships would you still invest in those human connections?

Then Jesus said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things. He will be rejected by the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and teachers of the law. And he will be killed. But after three days he will be raised from death.” Jesus continued to say to all of them, “Any of you who want to be my follower must stop thinking about yourself and what you want. You must be willing to carry the cross that is given to you every day for following me. Any of you who try to save the life you have will lose it. But you who give up your life for me will save it. - Luke 9:22-24